The PULPIT

A Periodical of Contemporary Preaching

NOVEMBER, 1948

Unknown Soldiers of the Cross
By PAUL MINNICH ROBINSON

The Church and Things that Make for Peace
By ROGER T. NOOE

A Singer of the Lord's Song
By ROBERT C. BATCHELDER

Christian Gratitude
By CHARLE RAY GOFF

The High Cost of Living Well
By ALFRED WESLEY HURST

If I Were a Pastor Again
By HERMAN F. REISSIG

The Function of Hymns
By MARTIN H. SCHARLEMANN

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Charles Clayton Morrison, *Editor*

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In the December Pulpit

THE DECEMBER issue of the Pulpit will feature a sermon by STANLEY I. STUBER, director of public relations for the Northern Baptist Convention. This sermon, which is entitled "Between Alpha and Omega," was preached in the American Church in Paris, September 19, 1948, on the occasion of a special service for delegates to the United Nations General Assembly. Dr. Stuber is official U.N. observer for the Baptist World Alliance.

The Christmas sermon for the December Pulpit comes from Evanston, Ill., and the pulpit of Ernest Fremont Tittle. It is with great pleasure that we offer this most excellent meditation for the Sunday preceding December 25, "The Wonder of Jesus."

Two excellent sermons of general interest have been selected. One is by Hoover Hupert, director of the youth department of the Methodist Board of Education, and is entitled, "Christ Above All." The other, "Our Protestant Witness," comes from Roland H. Bainton, professor of ecclesiastical history at Yale Divinity School.

The Preacher Problems Department will feature an article by Martin H. Scharlemann, the second of his series on the subject of church music. This article will deal with the problem of Christmas music in the local church.

Don't miss your December Pulpit!

WHO'S WHO IN THIS ISSUE

REV. PAUL MINNICH ROBINSON was called to the First Church of the Brethren, Hagerstown, Md., in 1940. A graduate of Princeton Seminary, he is the recipient of the Th.M. degree from the Lutheran Seminary, Philadelphia.

REV. ROGER T. NOOE has been pastor of Vine Street Christian Church in Nashville, Tenn., since 1925. A former member of the faculty of Vanderbilt School of Religion, he was chaplain (col.) on the staff of the governor of Tennessee, 1933-37.

A graduate of the Episcopal Theological School at Cambridge, Mass., REV. ROBERT C. BATCHELDER became rector of Saint James' Church, Lancaster, Pa., in 1939. He is chairman of the department of social relations of the diocese of Harrisburg.

REV. CHARLES RAY GOFF is minister of Chicago Temple (First Methodist Church), the "skyscraper" church in Chicago's Loop. A graduate of Garrett Biblical Institute, Evanston, Ill., Dr. Goff received his D.D. from that institution in 1934. He is also on the faculty of that seminary.

REV. ALFRED WESLEY HURST is pastor of Cleveland Park Congregational Church, Washington, D. C. A former president of Elon College (North Carolina) he was pastor of Pilgrim Congregational Church, Chattanooga, Tenn., for eleven years before going to the nation's capital.

After pastorates in Oconomowoc and Ripon, Wis., REV. CLARENCE SEIDENSPINNER became minister of the First Methodist Church in Racine, Wis., about seven years ago. He has given some time to teaching and several years ago published a book, *Form and Freedom in Worship.*

REV. HERMAN F. REISSIG, field secretary of the American Committee, the World Council of Churches, began his ministry in the Lutheran Church but later transferred to the Congregational Church. After years in the pastorate, with one interlude with a relief organization for Spanish Republicans during that country's civil war, he assumed his present position.

CHAPLAIN (MAJOR) MARTIN H. SCHARLEMANN is a Lutheran pastor. He received his Ph.D. degree from Washington University, St. Louis, and is a member of Phi Beta Kappa. A chaplain in the army since 1941, he is an instructor at the Army Chaplain School, Carlisle Barracks, Pa.

REV. PETER H. PLEUNE is minister of the Highlands Presbyterian Church, Louisville, Ky.

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THE EDITOR'S PAGE

The Event of the Month

A GREAT Foreign Missions Assembly was held in Columbus, Ohio, October 6-8. Though its 2,250 delegates represented only North American Protestantism, its outlook, like that of Amsterdam, was world embracing. It looked at distraught humanity and decided to double the impact of foreign missions in the next five years. The Foreign Missions Conference, which acts as the clearing house and common center of the missionary societies, took two years to prepare for the Columbus meeting. Every field was restudied in the light of postwar needs. Now this new endeavor goes forward unitedly. It may even result in the elimination of sectarianism from the missionary enterprise. For many years missionaries and the younger churches have appealed for freedom to present ecumenical Christianity and to establish ecumenical churches, rather than to transplant western denominationalism to these new lands. Their appeals receive powerful support from the spirit of Amsterdam, on which the Columbus Assembly worthily built.

Plan Advance For Foreign Missions

The Book of the Month

PROSPECTING FOR A UNITED CHURCH. *By Angus Dun. Harper,* $1.50.

IN THIS BOOK, the Episcopal bishop of Washington, D. C., has rendered a service to the cause of Christian unity which I believe is unique in the literature of this subject. Its uniqueness is in its method of approach. Bishop Dun does not begin at the top where the problems of church disunity present themselves full blown, so to speak. He takes off from the bottom, that is, from the local congregation, and works his way out and up, from local church to denomination, from "our" denomination to other denominations, from all our denominations to the one Church which all acknowledge as the true Church of Christ. At every level, he finds and reveals an implicit and irresistible impulse to be "tied in" with a higher unity. This impulse he shows is derived from the genius of Christianity itself. His method of getting into the subject has produced a book which every person of average intelligence will read with understanding, fascination and delight. Its chapters constitute the inaugural series of the William Henry Hoover lectureship on Christian unity established by the Disciples Divinity House at the University of Chicago. Bishop Dun was plainly aware of the gulf that separates the academic mind from the church, as church. But he crossed this gulf with a presentation which captured the interest of student and professor no less than that of the churchman. His book is characterized by simplicity of style, broad scholarship, a sympathetic appreciation of the view point of each of our many churches and a winsome reasonableness—a combination which ought to win for it a wide reading.

A Thought for the Month

ONCE upon a time the people of God started out from a deep valley to climb a high mountain at whose summit they descried a Shining Table-land. Unable to agree upon a common way, they divided into many groups. Each group chose a separate trail and started off by itself, sustained by the sincere conviction that its way was the true way to the lofty Kingdom of Light. After long wandering, their many paths converged midway in their ascent at an unexpected clearing, and they found themselves together. Beyond and above them could still be seen the Shining Table-land where God himself is moon and sun. There was deep rejoicing that they had found one another and they praised God in oblations of song and prayer. Weary with the ardors of their wanderings, they said: Let us remain together for a season! And they spent many days talking of the several ways by which they had come. Each asked the others: How could your trail have led to the same place as ours led us? Was it accident, or coincidence, or was it providence? With one accord they agreed that in their separate wanderings, they had all been accompanied by an invisible Guide. His unseen presence had been with them all. It was Christ who had brought them hither. With contrition and penitence for their blindness and stubbornness of heart, they fell at his feet in worship and praise. And when they arose they made one great resolve. Because Christ has brought us together, they said "we are resolved to stay together;" we shall climb the rest of the way together. In the joy and solemnity of this decision they made strong commitments to one another and to Christ, so that they would be bound together until they should reach the Kingdom of Light. And as they looked up, behold, a broad roadway reaching to the top of the mountain. They could see many obstacles to be surmounted, but the road was straight. And the light that fell upon it streamed from the Shining Table-land itself. The name of the midway clearing was Amsterdam.

A Little Parable of Amsterdam

Charles Clayton Morrison

Unknown Soldiers of the Cross

By PAUL MINNICH ROBINSON

Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life. Revelation 2:10.

I STOOD the other day beside the tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Washington and read the inscription upon it, "Here Rests in Honored Glory an American Soldier Known but to God." I wondered who he really was. He could have been a young man from the crowded tenements of a great city or from the open plains of the west. He might even have been a boy from this community or from our own church. It really mattered little, for he had now become the symbol of all American youth who laid down their lives in the muddy trenches of Europe in the First World War.

I felt that I would be a little embarrassed and ashamed if I should meet him face to face. I was not very proud of the way we had carried the torch he had handed us. I wondered what he would think if he knew that another generation of American youth had paid again for something he paid for once and didn't get. He and thousands of his comrades made their sacrifice in good faith. They had a simple ideal before them. They wanted the world to be a better place. They wanted the liberties which they had inherited from their fathers in this good land to be secured forever for their children. So this American lad, known only to God, without any thought of glory, laid down his life for the sake of freedom.

A NATION IS GRATEFUL

A grateful nation has tried to show its appreciation by giving him a marble tomb with a constant guard of honor before it. Yet we must admit that this is poor atonement for the waste war made of his life. He is honored and revered because he died for his country. But the thoughtful person wonders what he might have accomplished had he been permitted to live for his country. Our culture has assumed that these noble ideals of peace, freedom and justice must in the last analysis be preserved by military might. Our heroes in history are those who led our armed forces to conquest and victory. In their honor our soldiers march down the streets to the rhythm of stirring music in Memorial and Armistice Day parades, resplendent in uniforms and with guns on their shoulders, carrying the standards of our country.

And yet, if we have learned anything from the past decade of blood and sweat and tears, it is that Satan cannot cast out Satan and war cannot end war. Our cherished freedom cannot be preserved by force alone, nor will democracy itself survive simply by the sword. The time has come when we must realize that even more magnificent than dying for one's country is living for it. There have been hundreds of thousands of "unknown soldiers" across the history of America who have not been honored with marble tombs, and yet who, I am convinced, because they lived for great ideals, made a greater contribution to the real advancement of their country than all the warriors of history.

SOME UNKNOWN CHRISTIAN SOLDIERS

I am thinking of Christian parents who in the quietness of their homes have instilled into their children the love of God and the ideals of his Kingdom. We read much today about juvenile delinquency, problem children and problem parents, and, heaven knows, there are too many of them. But we so often forget all the noble, sincere, conscientious parents who have by their teaching and example trained their children to live in righteousness. They probably never gave a thought to the patriotism of good parenthood. But I want to tell you that the sturdy homes they have built in this broad land have contributed more to the strength and stability of our nation than all our fortresses on land and sea. When these noble fathers and mothers pass from us, there is no marble tomb for them in Arlington. They ask no other reward than to see their children grow to be God-fearing men and women who take their places of respect in the church and the communtiy. But in my book, they are the heroes of everyday life.

Susannah Wesley was the wife of a great man of God, a scholar and a teacher but a poor business man. When, for a small debt, he was cast into prison, she found that the responsibility for rearing their nineteen children rested largely upon her. Day by day, with the help of God, she sought to discharge her parental responsibilities until she gave to the world a family that has never ceased to bring blessing to mankind. Among them were John Wesley, the devout founder of Methodism, and Charles Wesley, the "sweet singer of Methodism," who has been called the greatest hymn writer of any age. I tell you, she is one of the great "unknown soldiers" of the world.

'THE HAND THAT ROCKS THE CRADLE'

And I think of Nancy Hanks, the mother of Abraham Lincoln, who, though she died when her son was but ten years old, left such an impression upon her child that, in the midst of his years of greatness, he confessed that all he was or hoped to be he owed to his mother. I do not know where she is buried, and

I am sure there is no guard of honor above her grave, but she too belongs among the "unknown soldiers" of our land.

And so we could go on, calling the roll of great men and women given to the world by worthy parents who sacrificed themselves for their children, and then receded into the limbo of the past and were forgotten. Not long ago, I was lecturing in a college chapel. A student came up to me after the service and said, "I want to tell you that I am in college today because of my father. He never had a chance for an education himself. All his life he has worked hard on a farm, and we are very poor. But he always wanted me to have the opportunity to go to college, and he was willing to make any kind of sacrifice to give me my chance." He continued, "Next year I expect to graduate from the college. I am going to be a minister, and I have a scholarship promised me from the seminary so that I can continue my studies." I should like to attend that college's commencement exercises next year, and when that lad's name is read and he is honored with his degree I would like to slip down into the audience somewhere beside that proud father with a special certificate of honor in my hand and say, "Here, this really belongs to you." I wish there were a special medal for such as he, a Legion of Honor or Bronze Star, for he is truly an "unknown soldier."

GREAT TEACHERS ALSO SERVE

Then there are the teachers, in our church schools and in the public schools, who have sacrificed so much of themselves to share what they have learned with their pupils. They are often misunderstood and too little appreciated. Yet they have helped to mold the character of America in a remarkable way. Think back in your own life, and you will see how greatly you have been influenced by conscientious teachers.

Here is Mark Hopkins, medical doctor and preacher both, who made such a profound impression upon his students at Williams College that one of them declared, "A university is Mark Hopkins on one end of a log and a student on the other." Or think of Horace Mann, who had carved for himself a promising career in politics, who was elected to Congress from the state of Massachusetts and might have been governor of that great state had he not chosen to become the president of little Antioch College in Ohio. He left fame and fortune behind him to be a humble teacher, but he influenced American education almost more than any other single individual. There is no great shrine erected in his memory, only a simple stone with his words upon it, "Be ashamed to die unless you have won some victory for humanity." He too must have a place of honor in the heart of America.

Or think of the scientists who spend a whole lifetime in a laboratory seeking to discover the secrets of disease. We do not hear much about them. Even when they make a discovery, it usually does not receive as much publicity as Ted Williams' batting average or Saturday's football games. And yet every one of us is in debt to them beyond our comprehension. When a physician gives us a sulfa drug or penicillin, I wonder if we realize that were it not for the medical research of some person unknown to us we would not have the benefit of these modern miracle drugs. Some of us here today owe our very lives to these "unknown soldiers" of medical science.

THE SEARCH FOR RADIUM

The world has thrilled at the story of Pierre and Marie Curie. In their search for radium they met with failure time after time. In the film story of their life, after the 487th experiment had failed, Pierre is ready to give up in despair, crying, "It can't be done; it can't be done! Maybe in a hundred years it can be done but never in our lifetime." Then Madame Curie replies firmly, "If it takes a hundred years, it will be a pity, but I dare not do less than work for it so long as I have life." That kind of determination, which has been so characteristic of those who have been willing to lose themselves in the service of mankind, may not have much of a reward in this life, but in the books of eternity it is the stuff of which true greatness is made.

I venture to say that before 1930, not many had ever heard of George Washington Carver, the great Negro scientist of the southland. He died in 1943, an old man, but not until he had by his discoveries blessed the rural life of the south, both black and white, more than any other man of his time. He took in his hand a common, ordinary peanut, and said, "Lord, show me what is in this peanut!" With rare genius, he was able to develop several hundred commercial uses for the peanut alone. Yet even the *Encyclopedia Britannica* carries no article about him, and when he died scarcely any notice was given by the press to his passing. No soldier marches by his grave, yet think what he too has meant to the life of America. He shall forever be numbered among our "unknown soldiers."

GOOD NEIGHBORS MERIT PRAISE

And here are the good neighbors who live in almost every community. They receive little recognition, because with our twisted sense of values we tend to publicize the evil that men do and overlook the good. And yet our lives are daily enriched by them and we accept their friendship as a part of everyday life. No monuments are built to this kind of neighborliness, yet it is the joy of loving friends that makes life worth while. It is such as these, the heroes of peace, that have contributed to the greatness of America.

And so we could go on and on, calling to mind the men and women who have built so much of themselves into the lives of other people, who, though they have never received much recognition from their fellow men, should forever be remembered in honor.

What is it that makes a hero? The Spirit of God

was writing to the church in ancient Smyrna, a church which had suffered severe persecution, and he said, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." That's it—faithfulness to one's duty. That is what makes a hero. I care not what your station in life may be. You may feel that your lot has been cast in an obscure corner of the community, and that your life does not count for much. It may be that the good you have done will never be noticed by the eyes of men. But I want to tell you that you too can be a hero, an "unknown soldier" in the eyes of God, if you are faithful to that which God has entrusted to your care, be it great or small. "Be faithful unto death," says God, "and *I*, not the world, will give you the crown of life."

The noble deeds that men have done may go unrewarded and unrecognized in this life. No marble tombs nor guards of honor will mark the resting place of many a great soul who has poured out his life in the service of God, the nation and his fellow men. But over them forever has God written in letters of inextinguishable flame, "A soldier of the cross, known in the heart of God." They are not forgotten in eternity.

The Church and Things That Make for Peace

By ROGER T. NOOE

If thou hadst known in this day, even thou, the things which belong unto peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. LUKE 19:42.

IN A LAMENTATION of love for the church that was Israel, our Lord, facing the Cross, said: "If thou hadst known the things that belong to thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes." The Jewish church looked backward, idolizing the past and hoping to restore the ancient kingdom. This did not belong to the peace then, and it does not now. "The old order changeth, yielding place to new," if men have the spirit to bring it to birth.

The Jews were in bondage to the myth of the superior race. Their horizon dipped at their own racial frontiers. They refused the Light that came into the world; they sought to bend the will of the Highest and Holiest to sanction and be means for their own unholy greed. This did not belong to peace then and it does not now.

We must confess with shame that some of these anachronisms persist in the Christian church of today. Yet with all the relativities that bedevil our thinking and the fragmentation we have made of the Kingdom of God, it is the hopeful conviction of this message that the church of our Lord, penitent, is slowly learning the things that belong to peace.

THE PICTURE IS NOT ALL DARK

When a distinguished scientist, thinking of how modern warfare would vaporize the world, quotes from II Peter: "The heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat," we can at least recall the rest of the quotation:

> What manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent, that ye be found of him in peace without spot, and blameless.

It surely must be our Christian conviction that it is God's will that such an earth shall come following the ordeal of fire through which we have passed.

Whatever the future may hold, it belongs to us to whom much has been entrusted. The church cannot be the church of him who dwelt among men and be isolated from the world. The church cannot be the church of the Word made flesh and be content with lovely dreams and cherished ideals. The church cannot be the church of the Cross without declaring the gospel of redemption and witnessing to the power of suffering love. The church cannot be the church that prays, "Thy will be done on earth," and have no concern where the destiny of human lives is determined. The church cannot be the church of him who spoke with authority and be no more than an echo of the cries of race, clan and nation.

THE CHURCH MUST BEGIN WITH GOD

In a world succumbing to the doctrine that what is right is what succeeds, in a time when we have victory without assurance, power without direction, responsibility without devotion, opportunity without vision, the church will get nowhere unless it begins with God and his revelation in Christ for men and their salvation. If the church does no more than this, there will come the dawn promising the new day.

Professor Wild of Harvard says that our Western civilization is beset by a disease which we define variously as nationalism, barbarism and tyranny. "One of the major symptoms of this disease," he says, "is the absence of any faith in a real order of existence, independent of the opinions and desires of the national group." If the church has no more than opinions to counter opinion, then we but give stones for bread and serpents for fish. If the church can do no more than follow an ideology of opportunism instead of a theology of moral imperatives, our house is left to us desolate.

We are all concerned about uproooted peoples. Well may we be even more concerned about uprooted

ideas. Democracy can become a corpse when its living spirit is not renewed and nourished by something deeper than itself. We cannot extract equality and brotherhood or peace and human rights or right human relations from the air. In all this it is the function of the church to be the Tree of Life whose leaves are for the healing of the nations.

WHEN THE CHURCH IS THE CHURCH

When the church is the church, its breadth of interest and ministry will not be limited, but its depth and dynamic will be increased. In accepting our measure of responsibility for a progressive ordering of the world in the will of God, no function of the church need be forfeited, but all together may be better fulfilled. Once we accept beyond recall that the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, that our ultimate trust is not in nationalism, supremacy of race, power politics or violence, but in the purpose of God made incarnate in human life, we will be concerned with the ideas and opinions of men, that they be Christian. To this end the word of God will be declared with new relevance and authority. The worth of the individual, which has become so cheap in the collective mass, in the growing power of the state and recurring wars, will be greatly enhanced as a new creation in Christ, transformed by the renewing of his mind, standing on his own feet. The church, having no other power than that which is indigenous to its own life, will heighten its teaching function. It will not be content with an emotion of the ideal until it is supported by structural thinking.

The hour is come to set our house in order. Let the world catch the contagion of its spirit from us as individuals and from the church. Divided minds can do little to unite the world. Spiritually split personalities are poorly prepared to bridge chasms between races and nations. The embarrassment of a divided church is upon us. Competitive denominationalism, when we are asking for a cooperative world, mocks our efforts.

WE SEE A GROWING FELLOWSHIP

Happily and hopefully we are witnessing a growing fellowship of all Christians. Let it be one which will manifest unity in variety. Let it be one of liberty under the Lordship of Christ. Let it be one in which love and good will unite peoples of all races. Pray God it will be one in which Christians shall once more hold the world together.

In this ecumenical fellowship with its revived evangelism throughout the world, with its vision of the freedom of all peoples and the solemn duty of providing the moral foundation for the political and economic ordering of the world, worship would once again become an energizing force.

No one claims perfection for the United Nations. Yet its preservation remains the best hope for one world. If we undergird this venture with patience, understanding and good will, it will be strengthened. By so much as any nation by-passes it through unilateral action, it will be weakened. The church is surely on solid ground when it prays and works that the Charter of the United Nations may be a living spirit and not a dead formula. The church will not equate itself with any system or party, but will honor its responsibility for the making of Christian citizens who seek to interpret the spirit of Christ in every human relationship.

Democracy is not without its dangers. Rights accepted without responsibility, freedom interpreted as license, public opinion emotionally derived instead of intelligently formed, deifying the majority by calling it the voice of God, labeling those who have Christian desire to put color into otherwise drab lives "Reds" and "Communists"—all these are perils to true patriotism and dangers to a progressive democracy.

The church is on solid ground when it educates for citizenship that will honor every man for his worth and hate no man for his race or color. The church is on solid ground when it provides spirit and principles for a statesmanship that will be strong without threats, patient and persevering without weakness and more realistic and constructive than what is subsumed in the idea of "getting tough." The church is on solid ground when in all human relations it bears the marks of the Cross.

WHAT CAN THE CHURCH DO FOR PEACE?

When I asked our friend and neighbor, Rabbi Julius Mark, who was a chaplain in the Pacific, "What can the church do for peace?" he quickly answered, "Practice what it preaches." This is both humbling and hopeful.

Dr. Mark was the preacher in our pulpit during Brotherhood Week. Out of deference to him I asked what scripture he would like to have read. He did not suggest the social passion of Amos or the seraphic vision of Isaiah, but asked that I read from the fourth chapter of the First Epistle of John: "If any man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, cannot love God whom he hath not seen."

In his refreshing autobiography, *River of Years,* Dr. Joseph Fort Newton says that, as he stood with Washington Cooper near Niagara Falls, the famous engineer said, "That is the greatest unused power on earth." To this the preacher replied, "No, my friend, the greatest unused power on earth is the spirit of God." Then said Mr. Cooper, "You are right. If only the church would become a school of spiritual technology, we could remake the world."

Surely it is not too much to ask that every congregation, in this day of life-and-death issues, will have some of its best informed men and women studying how to apply the principles of our religion to every human problem with the same ardor and devotion that the engineer shows in building canals to unite oceans and in spanning rivers with bridges to become highways for all people. In all this, Christ will be our leader, his Spirit will possess us and his truth will make us free from prejudice and provin-

cialism to enable us freely to do his will.

His voice as the sound of many waters is heard on all the troubled shores of the world. "My peace I give unto you . . . Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid . . . Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father . . ." Still he says, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God."

These are the things that belong to our peace. If we know them and if we do them we and all mankind will be blessed.

A Singer of the Lord's Song

A Biographical Sermon by ROBERT C. BATCHELDER

IN THE SPRING of 1714, a clergyman of a London Congregational chapel, a sick, discouraged man who believed that death was very near, accepted an invitation from a former lord mayor of London to be his guest for a week at his beautiful country estate in Hertfordshire. There in the midst of congenial friends and physical comfort, the ailing man could feast his eyes on beautiful gardens, wide fields and green trees. The week passed quickly by, and he was urged to stay longer. Then he was invited to make this his permanent home and to act as family chaplain. He accepted, and what began as a week's visit extended to a stay of thirty-four years.

It was a happy arrangement which gave him opportunity to write some forty books and a collection of hymns that have become famous. Even at the close of his life, after several years of mental and physical sickness, he was given devoted care and affection until his death occurred at the age of seventy-four.

ANNIVERSARY OF WATTS' DEATH

On November 25 the Protestant churches of our country will commemorate the two hundredth anniversary of Isaac Watts' death, and express their gratitude for this singer of the Lord's song. Because Watts sang the praise of God in tender and noble cadences we gladly repeat his verses today. They belong to that great common body of hymns which are a mighty ecumenical force in the church today. We can sing the Lord's song together, no matter how varied our liturgical or doctrinal differences.

The life of Isaac Watts was in no sense dramatic. He was born in 1674 as the eldest of a family of eight children in the town of Southampton. He was nurtured by the deep piety and faith of a simple household in the tradition of the dissenting churches. The religious intolerance of the times cast its dark shadow over the family. A few days after Isaac's birth his father began a term of more than a year in Southampton's jail because he preferred to worship in the fellowship led by the Rev. Nathaniel Robinson rather than in the established church. Daily the mother took the infant Isaac to the jail and, seated on the horseblock outside the entrance, fed him within sight of his imprisoned father. When Isaac was nine years old, the elder Watts began another six months of incarceration for the same reason, and upon his release spent two years away from his family, in hiding in London.

That this experience left a mark upon the sensitive spirit of the growing boy can well be understood. What a price men paid to win the freedom to go through the door of the church of their choice on Sunday mornings!

A TRULY RELIGIOUS HOME

In a home like the Watts', religion achieved at such personal cost was the motivating force of every action. Reading and study of the Bible, daily family prayers, and attendance at public worship were valued and practiced. In addition to this education young Watts studied at the local grammar school with a clergyman as teacher.

The revolution of 1688 finally brought freedom of worship to every Englishman, and for Isaac Watts, now fourteen years of age, this same year was marked by the culmination of his religious training in his conversion. Shortly after this experience he joined his father's church.

Because of the boy's intellectual gifts a family friend offered to make possible his enrollment at one of the universities. But this would have required attendance at the college chapel where the Book of Common Prayer was used, and rather than compromise his religious beliefs young Watts refused the offer and spent four years at an academy for free-church young men.

Hours of hard study, a constitution weak from birth and a deeply emotional and sensitive nature caused frequent periods of invalidism. During one of these periods, when he was twenty, Watts made his first effort at hymn writing. At the time he was recuperating at his family home in Southampton. Returning one Sunday from a church service with his father, Watts ridiculed the stiff and wooden metrical version of the Psalms by Sternhold and Hopkins then commonly used in churches. His father suggested that since he disliked to sing these hymns, why didn't he compose better ones? Accepting the challenge,

the young man immediately began work on hymns of his own, though it was some years before he published the results of his efforts.

His entrance into the ministry began officially with a sermon preached as a layman in 1698, July 16, when he was twenty-four years old. This showed such promise that it brought a call to become assistant minister at the Mark Lane Congregational Church, London, and led to his ordination four years later when he assumed the position of pastor. His ministry was happy. The congregation, which soon lost its church building, worshiped in Pinner's Hall for a time, and then finally built its own structure, the Bury Street Chapel. Watts was a real orator in an age of vigorous preachers, and his sermons were characterized as fresh, thoughtful and stimulating. The only complaint the congregation ever made was that they saw little of him in their homes. Time for pastoral visitation is not only a present-day lack!

Romance came but once into Watts' life. It began in a correspondence with Miss Elizabeth Singer on the basis of common religious and poetical interests. When finally the two met, and Miss Singer saw a man only five feet tall, with a sallow face, a hooked nose, prominent cheekbones, small eyes and deathlike color, her developing ardor was permanently cooled. When Watts proposed she refused him, though they remained good friends even after she married. It is hard to realize that children's hymns such as "Hush, my dear, lie still and slumber" were written by a bachelor!

FIRST HYMNAL IS PUBLISHED

After three years in the ministry, at the age of thirty, Isaac Watts' first book of hymns and religious essays was published, and this was followed two years later (1707) by the famous *Hymns and Spiritual Songs* containing 222 compositions. The second edition published two years later contained 365, including such well known compositions as "Come Holy Spirit, heavenly Dove," "There is a land of pure delight," and the famous "When I survey the wondrous cross."

Even after four years as a guest of Sir Thomas Abney, Watts' health continued poor. His absences from the Bury Street Chapel pulpit grew longer. Finally he wrote a touching letter of resignation. One can imagine the struggle the decision to give up that pastorate must have caused. In this same year (1718), Watts published the last of his hymn collections, *The Psalms of David Imitated.* This book included many more familiar hymns which have since become famous.

Then culminated the bitter attack Watts' hymns occasioned. They were described as "meddling with the scriptures." Hardest of all for Watts to bear must have been that the leader of the opposition was a very close friend, the Rev. Thomas Bradbury. It is difficult to realize the innovation these hymns were. Some churches refused to sing them at all, continuing to use the old paraphrases. Others compromised by singing hymns at the close of the service, so that those who did not wish to participate could leave first. But the need of the people to express in more congenial words their praise of God and the longing of their spirits has given the hymns their immortality.

As a hymn-writer Isaac Watts can be said to have died at the age of forty-four. The remaining years of his life were spent writing controversial books of theology. He also wrote a treatise on logic that was widely used. When he died, November 25, 1748, at the age of seventy-four, he was buried in the famous Bunhill Fields Cemetery, London, and his long-time hosts and friends completed their task by erecting an altar-like tomb to mark his final resting place. A commemorative tablet was also erected in Westminster Abbey.

Isaac Watts' hymns are his immortal gift to succeeding generations of Christian worshipers. We give thanks for him, because his songs are the faithful record of a soul that wrestled in prayer before God and made us the heirs of its spiritual victory.

PERSONAL EXPERIENCE IS KEY

But the popularity of Watts' hymns is due not merely to their happy phrasing of religious truth. The most important aspect is that to him religion was the result of a personal experience. His hymns almost always use the first person pronouns "I," "me," and "mine." This is an element of incalculable importance in the religious life of a Christian. We in this day tend to express our religion in abstract or impersonal words, words that are social in aspiration and scope. This is perhaps one indication of the tenuous or hesitant nature of many people's religion. The Christian religion is primarily commitment to a personal and individual discipleship. Jesus calls us as individuals into a fellowship just as he called the fishermen by the sea of Galilee. Urban and industrial life minimizes the value of the individual in his own eyes. The Christian faith is an affirmation of God's concern for the need of the individual man. "Follow thou me" is a call to individuals. Watts' hymns emphasize this great fundamental truth.

They were the outgrowth of a life and fellowship that was warm and emotional in its religious expression. One reads the words and realizes why an age which is uncertain or fearful of this aspect of Christianity has tended to reject them. The growth of the so-called evangelical groups in recent years, however, can be traced partly to the fact that people living in a materialistic and intellectual age must have their hearts aroused. People want their love to God and his love for them expressed in an emotional experience as well as by way of intellectual fact. Our hearts must be "strangely warmed."

WE MUST NOT FEAR EMOTION

Jules Payot has pointed out that we have no direct power over our emotions, which in turn have great power over our actions and that we do have direct power over our ideas, which have little power against

our emotions. He suggests that the way to break through this barrier is in reflective meditation, especially through religious worship, which holds certain ideas in the mind long enough for them to form emotional connections and thus to break up habit and create a new will. It becomes obvious that we cannot afford to fear emotion and its proper control in our religious life, for by it we can help to control our habits.

Nor can we ever forget that the Christian faith is characterized among the religions of the world as a religion of salvation. It brings men out of darkness, despair or cynicism into a new realm of God, in which fresh purpose, a new world of eternal values, becomes known. Even what seems to be an irrational truth is confidently affirmed. Thus the cross of Christ which defies reason alone to explain fully and comprehend it becomes meaningful in the words:

When I survey the wondrous Cross
Where the young Prince of Glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss,
And pour contempt on all my pride.

The author of this hymn knew that he had been rescued at tremendous cost. He was positive that no sacrifice of his could ever compensate for what had been done for him. Every step in the life of Jesus, every temptation overcome, every triumph of God's will over his, was a step on the ladder that led to the cross. Calvary is the culmination of the dedication to God's will of a whole person. "To the Greeks foolishness, to the Jews a stumbling block, but to them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God." Until every Christian today realizes again the fundamental truth that his redemption has cost such an infinite price, the Christian church will falter in the fulfillment of its task.

So it is that for an 18th century singer of the Lord's song, Isaac Watts, we still give thanks, for he showed us

Our God, our help in ages past,
Our hope for years to come,
Our shelter from the stormy blast,
And our eternal home.

Prayer for the United Nations

Delivered by the Rev. Stanley I. Stuber, Official United Nations Observer for the Baptist World Alliance, at the American Church in Paris, Sunday morning, September 19, 1948.

OUR ETERNAL GOD, Father of mankind and final Judge of the nations, who art ever near to those who truly seek Thee, remember us, we pray Thee, in Thy tender mercy in this crucial hour in the life of the world and in the development of the United Nations.

In a time charged with uncertainty and danger, when peacemaking seems to be increasingly difficult among nations, place Thy special blessing, we beseech Thee, upon this great world organization which has been dedicated to the making of world peace for all peoples everywhere.

We would thank Thee, most gracious God, that even against great odds this organization has made real progress in the creation of the basis for a lasting peace. We thank Thee for the constructive work which has been done, and which is continuing, through its various councils, committees and specialized agencies. For the secretary general, for all the delegates, the advisers and secretaries; for all those who extend its message through education, science and culture; for the millions of common people in churches and non-governmental agencies who place their trust in the United Nations, we would give Thee thanks.

Forgive us, O Lord, for all our narrow prejudices and lack of vision; for our failure to understand and for our little, selfish ambitions. Take away from us, we pray, all the barriers of mind and spirit which keep us from advancing toward the realization of true world peace.

Today, even as we try to recover from the shock of violence, we would keep in mind and heart those peacemakers who have become martyrs for this great cause of peace. May we ever honor their memories as soldiers of peace. Comfort their families; bless the land they once called home. And may we rededicate ourselves, and all that we have, to the principles for which they died, thus creating a living monument to a noble work only just begun. In their spirit, O Lord, help us to enlist thousands of others who, remembering these who have gone on before, will become missionaries for the cause of the world community.

As Christian people, those who follow the Prince of Peace, may we demonstrate, by our growing interest and our active support, our mutual concern for the great burdens which the United Nations is now carrying. Extend, we pray Thee, its message throughout our various communions, and in all Thy church prepare the way for the realization of the ideals which we find expressed so clearly in its Charter.

We would, O Lord, ask Thy special help in the solution of this vast refugee problem, in the creation of human rights and fundamental freedoms, in the establishment of better social and economic conditions, and in the care for the millions of homeless children. May we learn soon, O Lord, the lesson that it is only through close cooperation, for the benefit of all, that we can control the evils which lead to disorder and to war.

Strengthen, therefore, we pray, this hope of the peace-loving nations, and may it ever grow stronger in the building of foundations which will gradually insure for all a peace that all will be pleased to honor, and which will bring with it a new era of brotherhood in an atmosphere of good will surrounded by justice, faith and hope. Amen.

A Snapshot of God

A Sermon for Children by PETER H. PLEUNE

He that hath seen me hath seen the Father. John 14.9

EVERYBODY loves to look at pictures. That is why the world is so full of them. There are pictures on our walls at home, in the books and magazines and newspapers, photographs and snapshots all over the house, and the movies—just think of all the pictures that people see every day!

But there are even more pictures which we do not see with our eyes at all. You can close your eyes and see pictures, too. That is what happens when we think. To spell a word is to see a picture of it. You cannot think of a person or a place without seeing a picture of that person or place in your mind. The brain is just a picture gallery, a very wonderful one where we can have pictures of everything in the world. And in that picture gallery of our minds there ought to be one picture better than any other, and we ought to close our eyes and look at it many times a day. It is the picture of God.

You say that you do not know what God looks like. Perhaps you have forgotten that Jesus said we can see God because we can see *him*. Of course, we haven't any photograph of Jesus, either. The pictures we see of Jesus as a man are only what artists think he looked like. But still we can see him.

Every page of the New Testament has a picture of Jesus on it. He is walking along the shore of the Sea of Galilee, talking to the fishermen and asking them to follow him. You see him, don't you? He is talking to a crowd of people on the hillside, and he takes the lunch a little boy has brought, and with it he feeds the great crowd of people who have come to hear him. Close your eyes and you can see him. He is helping a lame man up from his mat and telling him to walk. He is touching a blind man's eyes and making him see. He is talking kindly with a strange woman by a well. He is going around always doing friendly things for people. He seems to love people always, even if they don't love him. He is just as kind to bad people as to good people. He is a friend to some people who do not have another friend. He is telling stories to a crowd of people who are pushing close not to miss a word. Here is another picture: He is stopping along the road to pat a little child on the head with a loving touch, and to put his arms around other children and to bless them as they all try to get near to him. When you think of Jesus you can just see him, can't you?

So we do have a picture of God. It is the picture of Jesus. It is a picture which each of us can have in our own mind. And God wants us to look at it every day. When we do, there is something that tells us we ought to be like that, too.

"The Hindu, Gandhi, has taught me more of the Spirit of Christ than perhaps any other man."
—E. STANLEY JONES

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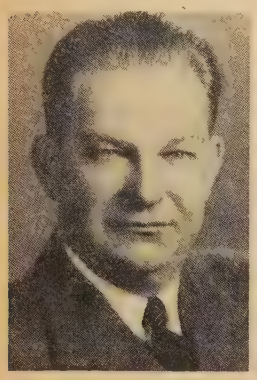
Christian Gratitude

By CHARLES RAY GOFF

The Spirit . . . makes us realize the blessings God has given us. I Corinthians 2:12.

I DOUBT if the human being exists that does not at times feel grateful. Even though life may be bitter and our dreams may be unrealized, we have moments when we are thankful in spite of ourselves or in spite of our circumstances.



This is not the result of being "human," for animals seem to exhibit something akin to gratitude. A dog or cat will show affection and even a pig will grunt a faint "thank you" for its food.

One would suppose that the higher we rise in the scale of life, the more we would feel the urge to be grateful. At least, if we were especially privileged we might be expected to become especially thankful. Actually, almost the reverse is true. The chronic complainers are not the patients in the county hospital. There, one often finds shining examples of people who have a highly developed sense of appreciation, and a visit with them sends one home in a chastened and penitent mood. And where do we find ingratitude? Well, quite often among the most favored. This was evident when wartime restrictions were imposed on all of us indiscriminately. The loudest wails came from those who actually suffered least.

This odd reversal of the expected is seen among the privileged in other than material matters. Not all who are possessed of a high I. Q. are necessarily full of thanksgiving. The mood of futility and the sense of despair that hovers over a meeting of intellectuals in these days is enough to cause the angels to hang their harps on heavenly willows and come down to examine this earthly phenomenon.

MAN AGAINST DARKNESS

Witness Prof. W. T. Stace and his recent picture of "Man Against Darkness" in the *Atlantic Monthly* for September 1948. Here is a modern intellectual confessing, "I believe in no religion at all," picturing this "meaningless world and a meaningless human life" and insisting that "there is in the universe, outside man, no spirituality, no regard for values, no friend in the sky, no help or comfort for man of any sort." He does feel that this state of affairs is a calamity, but insists that idealistic systems of thought were "born of the refusal of man to admit the cosmic darkness" and describes the "warm glow" of idealistic systems as "comforting illusions" in which "tender-minded intellectuals shelter themselves from the icy winds of the universe." No one could confuse that kind of thinking with the lofty thankfulness of the 145th Psalm, which asserts that "the Lord is gracious, and full of compassion; slow to anger, and of great mercy—and his tender mercies are over all his works."

Professor Stace is a philosopher in Princeton, a man endowed with an excellent mind. No doubt the Psalmist might also have rated well intellectually. One man sees the whole business of living as futile, with only the faintest glimmer of a chance, and the other sees it as a living universe where "the Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon him in truth."

THE PSALMIST HAD FAITH

The Psalmist knew nothing of modern skepticism. He would never have believed that "moral rules are merely an expression of our own likes and dislikes" or have said with Hobbes, "Good and evil are names that signify our appetites and aversions." He did believe in God and he was thankful to him for abundant mercies. Since a lively sense of obligation is a part of the normal make-up of a sane and well ordered personality, and unbalanced types are grasp-ingly selfish or are usually unmoved by emotions of appreciation, one would have to conclude that the Psalmist was a normal person and not an unbalanced type; but our modern skeptical intellectual is not necessarily a grasping or selfish person. He is not unbalanced. He simply sees nothing and feels nothing that cannot be explained by his "science"; hence he concludes, quite honestly, that there is no benefactor, no heavenly Father, no plan or purpose in all this world.

In all fairness to Professor Stace let me repeat that he does see a very faint glimmer of hope. He also feels the need for courage. He doubts that there can be much happiness in his way of life, but he maintains that it can be lived in "quiet content, accepting resignedly what cannot be helped, not expecting the impossible, and *thankful for small mercies!*" But how could that phrase, "thankful for small mercies," creep into an article which insists on a meaningless and godless world? Gratitude is defined as "a warm friendly feeling toward a benefactor." How strange, then, that one should have an urge to be thankful and have no one to thank! No benefactor toward whom one could direct this friendly feeling!

GRATITUDE IS THE PRODUCT OF RELIGION

This leads me to conclude that true gratitude is a product of the religious spirit and that only by the Spirit can we realize the blessings God has given us. The man who has no faith, no Holy Spirit to illumine his life, will likely discover "small mercies" and attempt to express some thankfulness to "whatever gods

there be," but it is the Spirit that makes us really appreciate a world that abounds in great mercies. Without this Spirit good men and intellectually honest men may find "the truth" and miss the spirit of Truth, which is the only truth that sets men free. True thankfulness will be the inevitable result of a life dominated by the Spirit. We read, "Except a man be born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God." If one cannot see that Kingdom and cannot enter into it, he will likely doubt its existence altogether.

Not so the person born of the Spirit. He is aware of another dimension. Like Thoreau he "hears another drummer." He lives for his spiritual kingdom and gladly serves its interests. He rejoices in its reality and his heart is full of gratitude. But that gratitude is the result of the Spirit which, Paul so clearly saw, "makes us realize the blessings God has given us."

I doubt if it will do much good to exhort people to be thankful for abundant harvests, good health or external blessings. We may help some few who are constant complainers to cease their whining, but true gratitude will come unbidden from a heart that is touched by the Spirit.

IRRELIGION IS AN OPIATE

The Communists seeing religious people accept hardships and actually finding cause for thanksgiving when their way has been hard have totally misunderstood this mood of gratitude. They have labeled religion an "opiate." But the true opium of the people is skepticism and irreligion. It heads to futility and hopelessness.

I remember hearing a preacher tell of visiting a little old lady in the poorhouse. She asked him if he would promise to conduct her funeral when the end came. She said she had a song she wanted sung. The day came, the pastor kept his word. He took along with him the best soloist in town and a bouquet of flowers to lay on the cheap casket. There were no mourners, but the words of the song echoed a strange thankfulness in a place where one would suppose it could never exist. It was her concluding testimony about life:

> "My Father is rich in houses and lands,
> He holdeth the wealth of the world in his hands;
> Of rubies and diamonds, of silver and gold
> His coffers are full, he has riches untold.
> I'm a child of a King, a child of a King.
> With Jesus, my Savior, I'm a child of a King."

That kind of gratitude, born of the Spirit, is the only kind that can see through the darkness to the breaking day.

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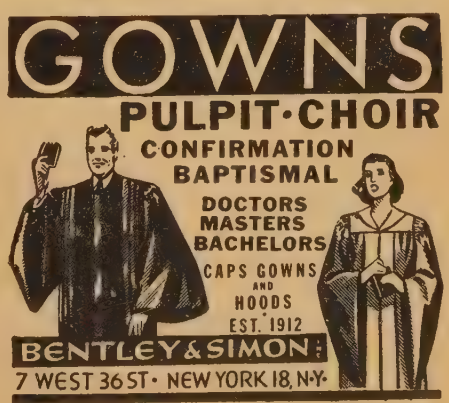

The High Cost of Living Well

By ALFRED WESLEY HURST

If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whosoever would save his life shall lose it, and whosoever shall lose his life for my sake shall find it. Matthew 16:24, 25.

THE HIGH COST of living is a matter of universal concern. Everyone is aware of it and is feeling the pinch. A matter about which there is less concern is the high cost of living *well*. This has little to do with scarcity or inflationary spirals. At times it is more costly and difficult than at others but it is never cheap. Many of the costs of the good life are hidden and are uncovered only after a careful cost analysis.

Jesus never claimed that the good life could be realized without heavy costs. He was tempted to suggest short cuts and to hold out the allurement of easy bargains—to turn stones into bread and win a following among the hungry and oppressed. But he scorned such cheap measures and declared frankly, "If anyone would follow me, let him renounce self and take up his cross and follow me." In short, let him pay the price.

THE COST OF PRODUCTION

First is the initial cost of production. This is basic. Jesus said: "Which of you desiring to build a tower, does not sit down first and calculate the cost, asking if he has the means to finish it?"

Never have the costs of the abundant life been low. It requires above all things great discipline. Many consider this bad news for they have not yet learned that the city of happiness can be arrived at only by the hard, steep road of discipline. They find it difficult to understand the Psalmist who sang, "Happy is he who has thy discipline," or Jesus himself who declared, "Everyone has to be consecrated by the fires of discipline." But the Psalmist and Jesus were right. The good life makes stern demands and production cannot even be begun without paying

The high cost of living well physically cannot be avoided. Paul, in his first letter to his Corinthian friends, said, "Any man who enters an athletic contest goes into strict training, to win a prize that soon will wither, but the one we compete for will never wither." He goes on to say, "I beat and bruise [discipline] my body and make it my slave that I may not be disqualified in the contest." In times of stress especially there are those who say it is all right to do anything which doesn't harm your health, that nothing is wrong which does not interfere with the functioning of your physical organism. It must be clear that this is an unsound position to take. A man is far more than a wellfed physical organism.

During the war many a soldier went to pieces physically not because of disease but because he had failed to achieve self-mastery. It was discovered then that the morale of a soldier is quite as important as his physical health. Lynn Harold Hough says the body is like a magnificent horse. Unbroken and untamed, it is a wild and lawless thing; but with the jockey firmly seated in the saddle, the powerful stallion thunders down the track and wins the race.

Christianity does not worship the body. Neither does it repudiate the body as does the ascetic. It would discipline the body's fine strength and turn it to good uses. The body is neither good nor bad in itself. It can be used to debauch life and it can be used to serve the high spiritual purposes of living.

THE COST OF MORAL LIVING

Then there is the high cost of living well morally, for in the very texture of the universe are woven some well defined moral sanctions. The keeper of the world raps on the counter and announces the price we must pay: "Only truth and loyalty and mutuality are the accepted mediums of exchange here; to attempt to use falsehood and treachery and selfishness is criminal." These moral principles are summed up in the Old Testament: "What doth the Lord require of thee but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God." There are set forth by the profoundest Greek and Latin thinkers and in the most penetrating literature of all the centuries. Jesus approved these sanctions and added a positive phrasing in what we call the Golden Rule.

The cost of living the moral life is high because of the dark element in human nature which leads man to do evil wilfully. Knowing what is morally right, he does evil; aware of the truth, he makes room for falsehood in his heart; saluting loyalty outwardly, he puts treachery in his heart. Although he knows better, he creates evil and allows it to reign over the kingdoms of his inner and outer life. This will to evil is like a corrosive poison at the core of life. To redeem life from it is not easy. Indeed the cost is tremendous in struggle and sacrifice.

THE COST OF LIVING WELL INTELLECTUALLY

Our cost analysis reveals also the high cost of living well intellectually. Man is a thinking animal who deliberately chooses when he is confronted by alternatives. He reasons with himself and with his fellow men. His mind serves as a kind of rudder to guide his course to the right or to the left. His mind needs to be trained, however. Without discipline it may be

the instrument of distortion and falsehood rather than truth.

Ignorance is part of the world's tragic plight. Although much of man's unhappiness is the result of evil intentions, not a little of it is due to ignorance. The only cure of the disease which plagues the human race is knowledge. But even knowledge can be superficial. We in America have learned much about things, even the secret of the atom; but we are woefully superficial in our knowledge of what makes human beings tick. Christianity has never claimed to be able to impart knowledge in every field of human experience but it does encourage a quest for knowledge about man's nature and destiny, and provides the discipline which will lead to freedom from ignorance. "Ye shall know the truth," said Jesus, "and the truth shall make you free."

Christianity has never offered to sell truth at a bargain counter. Prejudices may be dispensed there, but not truth. Its cost in discipline is tremendous. Truth may be unpleasant and unpalatable to man's lower selfish nature. Intellectual emancipation comes when we not only know the truth but love it.

SPIRITUAL WELL-BEING IS COSTLY

Our cost analysis would not be complete without some indication of the high cost of living well spiritually. Man is both dust and deity. On the one hand he is bound to the earth in an inescapable kinship with the animal kingdom. With that kingdom he shares biological impulses and is subject to the laws of physics. On the other hand he is a living soul whose kinship is with a realm above him. Created in the image of God he has the power to decide, to create, to imitate, to control and master and use that which is below him, to worship and obey that which is above him. "He is to be king of nature and the loyal and loving servant of God."

But the cost of spiritual well-being is not low. There are no bargains here either. Man becomes so easily intoxicated with a sense of his own power to create and rule that he takes it for granted he can do everything without God's help. This is what has been called "man's ultimate sin." Man's powers are relative, not absolute. But his inordinate pride blinds him to the fact that he is not the "master of his fate" or the "captain of his [own] soul." Irving Babbitt once said: "The trouble with Henry Adams was that he could not find anything in the universe greater than himself." The price of a man's spiritual well-being is the realization that there is something in the universe greater than humanity and bringing one's

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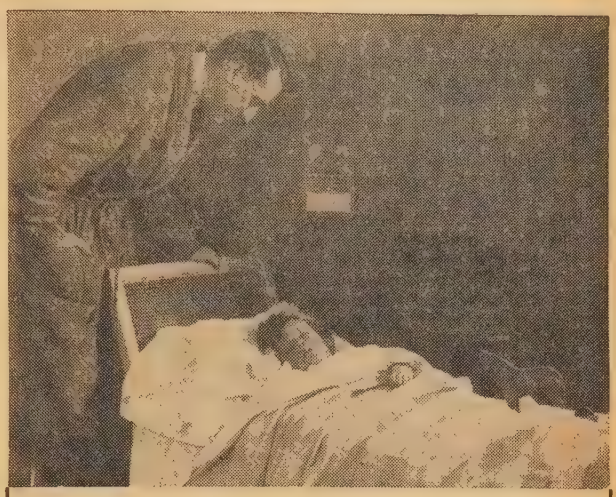

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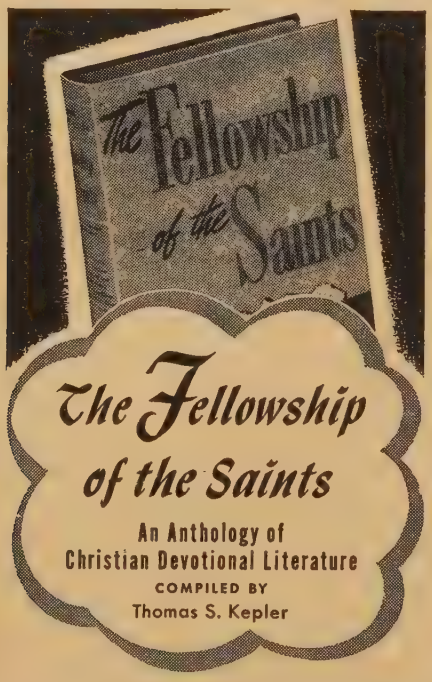
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life into right relation to that power.

Distasteful as the high cost may be to us, if we would achieve spiritual well-being, we must admit our limitations and our dependence upon God. We need a moral master who loves us with a deep and unselfish love. Without this, life is incomplete and unfulfilled.

THE TAX OF SUFFERING

Another item in the cost of the good life is taxes. In I Peter 5:9 we read, according to Moffatt's translation, "Learn to pay the tax of suffering as the rest of your brotherhood throughout the world." The tax of suffering adds to the high cost of living well.

Paul "served the Lord in all humility, with many a tear and many a trial." Jesus put a cross at the heart of life. A sorrow, bravely lived through, makes us richer in poise and tenderness. Battles fought give us courage. The road which leads to God and goodness is not easy but the horizons of life widen as we climb.

The cross at the heart of our faith reveals the impressive fact that the well-being of man is realized at the cost of a cross in the heart of God. The only way to destroy imperfection is to suffer for it. In the cross God seems to say, "I will not destroy you for living an imperfect life; I will suffer for you." If a man can look at the cross of Christ and not be moved to turn his back on his own devastating pride, his moral selfishness, and his sensuality, there is nothing that can budge him. But millions have been moved by the cross.

THE RETAIL COST OF CHRISTIAN LIVING

A final important item in the high cost of living well is the retail cost in deeds of service. Goodness must be good for something. It is expendable. The cost of distribution is high because goodness cannot be distributed wholesale. It is retailed by individuals who have achieved the measure of true greatness in willingness to be the servants of all, in a willingness to lose life in order to find it. Social formulas will not save our world. They are too cheap. The most flawless plan will break down if men who are selfish at heart try to work it. The good society can be created only by people who are good at heart, who, in Moffatt's fine phrase, are "a colony of heaven" on the earth. Such people are apostles of sensitiveness. They have "a zest for good works." After the pattern of Christ they go about doing good. They renounce self and follow Christ in daily sacrificial service.

We have come, then, to the end of our analysis of the high cost of living well: the cost of production in physical, moral, intellectual and spiritual discipline; the tax of suffering and the cost of distribution in deeds of service. But the high cost of living well constitutes a paradox. For did not Jesus tell the woman of Samaria that it is "the gift of God?" And so it is. The farmer pays the cost of production in labor as he tills the soil, but still the germ in the wheat, the rain and sunshine and the soil's fertility are the gift of God. In this same manner the good

life is won at tremendous cost in human discipline while yet the germ of spiritual life, the rain of faith, the sunshine of love, the fertilizing power of truth, are free gifts of God.

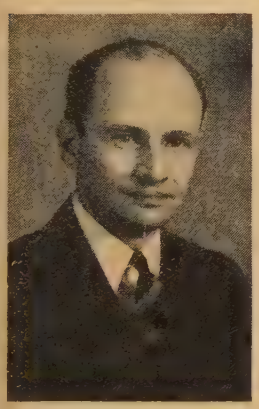
This paradox is made clear in the life of the Master of men. He lived in a genuinely human body. He disciplined his body, his mind and his spirit to serve the life of the Kingdom above. But those who knew him were aware that in him was a quality of life which had not been achieved by his own unaided strength. In him were a humility, a purity, an unselfishness, a love which were heaven sent; the life that was in him was the gift of God to mankind. It is he, this Master of men, who says to us today, "If any man will be my follower, let him renounce self, pay his tax of suffering, and follow me."

The Altar of God

A Communion Sermon

By CLARENCE SEIDENSPINNER

AT THE HEART of the church is Divine Worship, and at the heart of worship is the altar of God. This altar may be nothing more than an idea in a man's heart. He may agree with other Christians to meet on the Lord's day in a schoolhouse or grove of trees or a simple meeting place for the exercises of worship. No visible altar may be present. Only the idea of God's presence may call this little company of people together for their service. That idea then becomes the altar around which they meet.



On the other hand, the altar may be a visible symbol of wood or stone. To erect such an altar is an old and comforting custom that takes us back through nineteen Christian centuries to those Old Testament days now bathed in the mists of time, when the congregation of Israel gathered around the temple altar in Jerusalem to chant: "O send out thy light and thy truth: let them lead me; let them bring me unto thy holy hill, and to thy tabernacle. Then will I go unto the altar of God, unto God my exceeding joy."

THE ALTAR IS A SYMBOL

The altar is an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual fact. It is a symbol of God's presence in the church. That is what comes to mind when we see the holy table. We feel at once that the Lord is in his holy temple and our hearts are silent in adoration before him. That is why the altar is properly adorned with beautiful coverings and flowers. These flowers and light and lovely coverings are not there for the esthetic delight of the congregation. They are there to honor God's presence. They

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are placed there because we are glad that God is in his church and that we have set aside this table to signify his presence.

It is only through such symbols that the great world of the spirit can be represented. The flag is a typical symbol. When we look at the flag we see more than this bit of colored bunting. We see the entire nation with its hopes and dreams. Men like Emerson, Lowell, Longfellow and Whitman come to mind; statesmen like Washington, Jefferson and Lincoln; inventors like Fulton and Edison; preachers like Beecher, Brooks and Fosdick. The flag is but a sign which brings to vivid life the throbbing heart of a whole people.

A sacrament has this same power. A sacrament is also an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace. Baptism signifies cleansing of the life and making it ready for fellowship in the church. Holy Communion signifies the presence of Christ in the bread and wine of the service. Meeting in the sixteenth century, the Council of Trent listed seven sacraments. Protestantism reduced them to two, but for the sensitive person all of life is sacramental, for all of life has the power to reveal the world of the spirit.

Thus the altar stirs our imagination and reminds us of God who is at the heart of the spiritual world. When we see this table, properly adorned, at the heart of the church, we are assured that the creative mind and intelligence and love that we call God is at the heart of the world. Of course, we can never represent him really by anything that we say or do, for God is a spirit and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth. We can only represent God symbolically or sacramentally and the altar is one such way of doing this.

WHY THE ALTAR IS CENTRAL

If the altar is to carry us into the presence of God Almighty himself, we must approach it sacramentally. We must come to it with a sensitive disposition and respond to its subtle suggestion of the presence of God. We must think of it as a window into the heavenly world. We must approach it the way the Psalmist approached nature when he said: "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge."

When we look at the altar we are reminded of a second important fact, namely, the centrality of God in our life. That is why the altar is placed in the center of the chancel. It is the focal point of vision within the church. The moment you enter the nave you see the altar. In this way God is the center of each individual human life. He is constantly present doing for us that which needs to be done, and reminding us of our central loyalty in life.

Most of us need something in our life that may be thought of as the Rock of Ages. Fortunes may rise and fall, as indeed they do; energy may ebb and flow, as it does in the high and low moments of health; friends may come and go; those upon whom we counted most may constantly disappoint us; we may be driven from place to place; but through all these changes in our earthly lot, God is there as the primal reality upon which our lives rest. No wonder that the seers of religion have declared: "Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations.

The altar symbolizes this constant centrality of God. Wherever you are, you may rest before the altar. You may step into any church anywhere around the world and there you will find the altar to remind you of this central fact in your life, and before it you may pour out your heart to God and find the peace and sanity and poise and comfort that he alone can bring. Yes, whatever happens you may say as you contemplate this holy table: "I will go unto the altar of God, unto God my exceeding joy."

WE ARE REMINDED OF GOD

When we kneel before the altar we are reminded of a third important fact. We are reminded of God's claim upon our time and possessions. This is the oldest tradition we have regarding the altar. It is the table to which we bring our sacrifices. You remember the Old Testament stories of the offering of the people, the sheep and the doves brought to the temple altar and there sacrificed as an acceptable offering to the Deity.

You know also how the altar is used sacrificially among us. Upon it are placed the offerings of the people when they are received during Divine Worship. Upon it are also placed the wonderful symbolic offerings of bread and wine, symbols of the sacrifice which Christ made for us all. That is why there is a cross upon our altar. It is a Christian altar, ever reminding us of the fact of sacrifice in the Christian tradition.

Yes, the altar is a perpetual call to each one of us to render unto God those things which belong to him. We cannot escape this call. Those things which belong to him may be a portion of our time which ought to be devoted to the extension of his Kingdom: thoughtfulness and love which may be expressed in personal meditation and devotion; money which needs to be given for the work of his holy church; deeper loyalty to him and to his fellowship upon this earth; perhaps one's very soul. Many people have not as yet given their hearts to Christ. The altar is the call for this act of supreme dedication and sacrifice. It bids each one of us to give his heart to Christ anew.

In other words, the altar is a perpetual call to perpetual sacrifice. We are never finished with this sort of thing. We do not make one gift to God and say: "There, it is done." All our lives we must be responding to the sacrificial. This action fraught with pain and love is spoken of in our Communion service in these words: "And here we offer and present unto Thee, O Lord, ourselves, our souls and bodies, to be a reasonable, holy and living sacrifice unto Thee."

If I Were a Pastor Again

By HERMAN F. REISSIG

FOR FIFTEEN months I have had a secretarial position in an interdenominational organization. Looking back on my work in three churches and observing from my present position the work done by other pastors, I have come to some decisions on what I would do if I were once more to lead a local church. For what they may be worth I share them with you.

A minister ought, to be sure, to adjust himself as far as is possible to the needs of the church he is serving. Some of us make the mistake of deciding the kind of ministry we expect to carry on and then, in effect, saying to the church that calls us: "I am this kind of minister and the church must adjust itself to me as best it can." If I were to take another church I would try to do what needs to be done in that particular church, even going somewhat against my own grain and not making the best use of my particular talents. This does not mean that I would unquestioningly accept the opinion of the church officers on the kind of ministry their church needs. The minister in a new field is sometimes a better judge of that than they are. I would try, however, to be as objective as possible about the needs and opportunities of the church. I would have frank and searching talks with the leaders. Then I would try to be the kind of minister that church seemed to need.

● *Do Not Attempt the Impossible*

This attitude, however, can be carried too far. Many a minister robs the Kingdom of God of his own fullest possible service by trying to do what he never was cut out for. I know a pastor who in administration is almost a complete loss. He has no more ability to run an every-member canvass than he would have in digging an oil well. But when it comes to calling on the sick I am convinced there is none better. His people know that he loves them and they have learned to love him. He does immeasurable good just by putting himself in the midst of the parish. On the other hand, there are able men who will never be anything else than wooden in pastoral work. They are brilliant preachers and sometimes able administrators. Let them preach and administer!

Any psychologist will agree that it is ruinous to try to force oneself over a long period to do what one can't do well. Perhaps some ministers should say to their officers: "Look, I love my people and I mean to serve the church to the best of my ability. But I'm simply not good at some things and trying to do them just makes me—and perhaps you also—unhappy. Will you bear with me and try to find some way to compensate for my deficiencies?"

People pre-eminently need two things from their minister—teaching that will help them to see the relevance of the gospel to their personal and social needs, and personal counseling. Men and women are deeply confused by the trends and events of our time. They do not know how to fit the gospel to what is going on in the world. So the minister must be, whatever else he is or is not, a patient and untiring student of the gospel, on one hand, and of modern life, on the other. He must do more

H. F. REISSIG

than denounce the sins of the age. He must try to understand them. Through endless reading, personal observation and quiet thought he must try to be an expert on the cultural facts of our time. Then parallel with his studies of modern life, he must be an unremitting student of the Bible. To bring the two together—that is his job. In the pulpit, in small groups, on the platform, in conversation, the minister will be everlastingly at the business of throwing light from the gospel on contemporary life.

● *One Must Find Ways to Teach*

He must find as many ways as possible to teach his people. The pulpit may be the most conspicuous way but it is not by any means the only way, or necessarily the most effective. Let the minister say to himself: "The gospel is an interpretation of life and a way of life. I am here in this church and in this community to help people understand the Christian interpretation and to indicate how they can live by it. I must be on the alert for every possible chance to interpret and to teach." If a sermon has met with a particularly good response, why not print it? That is a good way to reach people. The minister should be on the alert for good religious books to recommend to his people. If in a ministry of five years he can get just a few people into the habit of reading books on religion he will have achieved something. Why not print the titles of a few books dealing with the subject of the sermon in the Sunday calendar? Why not mention, orally and in print, the titles of significant articles? Of course this sort of thing can be overdone. If a minister is too insistent about it his people may suspect he wants to do their thinking for them.

● *Exploring All Possibilities*

The minister might ask himself, Have I talked with the editor of my newspaper? There is almost no end of ways in which the newspaper can be used to help the minister, not merely to publicize the activities of his parish but to spread the Christian interpretation. More editors would cooperate with ministers if the ministers would cooperate with them. Have I really explored the possibilities of the radio? What about the service clubs that meet almost weekly in almost every city and town? The fact that the clubs will not tolerate a straight sermon does not mean that the minister cannot "get in there" with something that is not likely to be said unless a Christian leader says it.

There is another method of leading people to the deeper levels of the Christian life which few ministers are using. When I had become well acquainted with my people I would try to arrange a series of weekly meetings with a small number—not more than twelve—for informal conversations. Spiritual "retreats," at their best, indicate what such meetings would be like. There would be no formal address—just a few words by the minister or another member of the group to open up a subject. The emphasis would be on a free and frank atmosphere and on making it possible for each one to share his deeper experiences, his concerns and perplexities. There might be a liberal use of silence. After a few meetings the members of the group would have

sloughed off the hesitations which most of us have in talking about our best hours as well as about our difficulties.

It should be emphasized that we would come together not only as persons seeking light for ourselves but as members of a church, each one responsible for the spiritual life of the congregation. It might well be that persons who together had searched their hearts, faced the depths and the heights, could refresh and deepen the spiritual life of the whole church. Since it is important that all members of such a group attend all the meetings, it would not be wise to run the series to more than six or eight weeks. Perhaps there could be two such groups each year.

The minister who understands the need for Christian teaching will be tempted to spend almost all his time on this phase of his work. It is never ended. His preaching, speaking and writing will never be as effective as they ought to be. So he will need to make a rather arbitrary division of his time. Two or three hours of secluded study in the morning, an hour of reading at lunch time and another hour or more in the evening might be a good goal to aim at. What a minister can do in this respect will depend on the kind of church he is serving and on other factors. But I do not think there can be any excuse for not keeping the bulk of each morning for hard and concentrated study. This, at least, can be said: If the minister is not a good teacher he is not an adequate minister. If I were to re-enter the parish ministry I would do so with a resolution to be a serious and constant student and to be as effective in teaching as my endowments permit.

● *The Individual Is Important*

Not in a secondary place but right alongside the work of teaching I would put the more specifically pastoral ministry. I never did enough personal work. I reported annually to the membership that I had made so many hundred calls. But it was not enough. It would never be enough, but I would try to spend more time at it. I would use more imagination, think of more and more effective ways of meeting the needs of individual men and women. We used to talk of "winning people, one by one." Sometimes that meant merely getting them to join the church. But there is no substitute for thinking about and approaching people one by one. In addition to house calls there are the telephone, the letter note, visits to office and factory, a chat over the luncheon table. I would try to be as much as possible where my people are.

I would try to guard against the impression we ministers so often make that we are so busy that people really must not think of bothering us. People do not bring problems to you? Perhaps you have, in indirect ways by talk of how many things you have to do, suggested to them that a call on you for the purpose of talking about a personal problem would be an imposition. The minister who leaves this impression with his people—or worse, the impression that he might not be sympathetic—is a failure at one of the two most vital points in his ministry. How many people have said to me, "I have been wanting for a long time to talk to you but you are so busy." It always made me wince. If I went back to the parish ministry I would do my level best to make it easy for confused men and women to sit down for a talk with their minister. I would remember that the most effective way to get people to make use of whatever help I can give them is not to make announcements of my availability, but to preach and deal generally with the congregation in such a way as to prove that I am a sympathetic and interested friend. Our people know, whether or not we really care about them as persons.

Readers of this article may note the absence of the word "evangelism" and of phrases like "winning souls for Christ." They may wonder if this does not indicate some underemphasis on the specifically evangelistic task of the church. I certainly hope it would not be so! There can be no real Christian life save as it is incorporated in the Christian fellowship. No minister can be satisfied with merely interpreting the gospel. He must confront men with it, urge it upon them and be unceasingly at the business of bringing them to the point of a definite personal decision. All this is implied in what I have said about teaching.

To be sure there are other things the parish minister must do. He cannot and should not try to escape some leadership in community work. He will carry his share of denominational leadership. Even if he has full-time assistance he must give some hours weekly to the administrative supervision of his church. But if I were to serve a church again I would—since some things must be put first—ask the cooperation of the congregation, particularly of the officers, in helping me to be, first of all, a real teacher and a helpful pastor.

Poems of Brotherhood

By THOMAS CURTIS CLARK

PRAYER for BROTHERHOOD

O Christ, great lover of all souls,
Meek Lord of sympathy,
Our lips, how eloquent they are!
Our hearts, how far from thee!

We worship our dividing walls,
We boast our caste and clan;
Oh, let thy Kingdom quickly come—
A brotherhood of man.

If any churchly fashions lurk
To thwart thy larger will,
Let them in love be crucified
As we thy wish fulfill.

Renew in us 'good will to men,'
Transform our selfish creeds,
That we may pray 'Thy Kingdom come'
In eloquence of deeds.

FOOL

WHO can go on singing
When millions are in tears?
Who can live in smiling faith
With millions torn by fears?
Who can say that life is sweet
With millions robbed of bread and meat?

Yet I shall go on singing,
Though foolish I may be;
Yet I shall hope with sturdy faith
A better world to see;
Still I shall claim that life is good,
And chant my creed of brotherhood.

BROTHERHOOD

WHEN men shall live in loving faith
And not for golden gain,
When greed becomes a vanished wraith
The Christ at last shall reign.

When beauty takes its rightful place
Within the hearts of men,
When terror yields to kindly grace
The earth will bloom again.

Then little children, born of joy,
Shall thrive by tender care;
Enslaving toil will not destroy
Their bodies angel-fair.

When nations plan for human weal,
Nor bow to kings and courts,
When faithless laws no more conceal
The sham of guns and forts,

The haunting fear of war shall go,
The battled years shall cease,
And in a day the earth shall know
The benison of peace.

These Poems are selected from God's Dreams, by Thomas Curtis Clark, Harper & Brothers.

The Function of Hymns

By MARTIN H. SCHARLEMANN

TO APPRECIATE the function of hymns, it is necessary to arrive at a definition. This becomes all the more urgent in view of the fact that hymns have not always been defined in the same way. St. Augustine, for instance, gave the following definition: "Hymns are praises of God with singing; hymns are songs containing praises of God. If there be praise, and not praise of God, it is not a hymn. If there be praise and praise of God, but it is not sung, it is not a hymn. It is necessary, therefore, if it be a hymn, that it have these three things: both praise and praise of God, and that it be sung."

Echoing these statements of the venerable Bishop of Hippo, the Council of Toledo, in 633, adopted the following definition: "Whatever poems, then, are sung in the praise of God are called hymns. A hymn, moreover, is of those who sing and praise, which from the Greek into Latin is interpreted *laus,* because it is a song of joy and praise; but properly, hymns are those containing the praise of God."

● *Old Definitions Are Lacking*

It is not difficult to see that these statements are inadequate for us of today. We should hardly limit ourselves, in the choice of hymns, to only such as contain praise of God. There are other moods of worship, too, such as resignation and self-surrender. Nor are all our hymns addressed directly to God, although of course they must of necessity be permeated with a sense of his presence. For that reason, the Hymn Society of America has accepted the words of the late Carl F. Price as its own: "A Christian hymn is a lyric poem, reverently and devotionally conceived, which is designed to be sung and which expresses the worshiper's attitude toward God, or God's purposes, in human life." America's foremost authority on hymns, L. F. Benson, puts the whole matter more simply: "The Christian hymn . . . is a form of words appropriate to be sung or chanted in public devotions."

From this it becomes evident that hymns are expressions of devotion, that in them there must be a motion toward God, and that, to put it in another way, hymns are "vehicles of worship."

Since hymns are "vehicles of worship," and since they are intended to be used for *public* devotions, there follow certain implications which it may be well to state and elaborate.

Public worship is group expression; it is a corporate act. For that reason the words of a hymn should, normally, be impersonal; that is to say, they ought to express sentiments to which everyone in the congregation may subscribe. Hence, the use of the plural of the first person pronoun is more desirable than the use of the singular. "To Thee, O Lord, our hearts *we* raise" is better than, "Give ear to *my* voice, O Lord, when *I* call upon Thee." As a matter of fact, the corporate nature of worship can be and sometimes is destroyed by the use of hymns which overemphasize the singular first person pronoun, for they atomize rather than unify the congregation.

This unification, however, must take place on more than the horizontal level. That kind of unification can be accomplished also by a few minutes of community singing at a Rotary club meeting. Since the hymn is a vehicle of *worship,* it ought to be full of movement toward God. The direction of hymns is upward, drawing the worshipers together and along into the presence of almighty God. Hymns express an attitude of reverence; and the motion of reverence is always from the lower to the higher, from the creature to the Creator.

M. H. SCHARLEMANN

● *Hymns Suggest Infinity*

This means that hymns are not properly used when their only purpose is to get the congregation into a jolly mood, or to cure possible cases of dyspepsia in the audience. These are mundane achievements, and hymns are not meant to be mundane. They want to express an attitude of adoration.

It is one of the chief functions of the music to which hymns are set to give the whole the suggestion of infinity. Where there is that happy marriage of words to music which is the hallmark of a good hymn, the significance of the sentiment expressed by the words is heightened by the suggestion of infinity found in the music. The words of the hymn survey the experiences of a life led in the presence of God; the hymn tune suggests the meaning and value of these experiences for the congregation as an expression of the "communion of saints."

● *The Place of the Hymn*

The function of an individual hymn may vary according to its particular place in the service. A worship service is presumed to have order; hence it is referred to as an order of service (worship). This means that corporate worship follows a certain line of progress.

The opening hymn, therefore, ought to be a great hymn of adoration, or a call to worship, inviting the worshipers to join in the adoration of God. Normally it is a mistake to narrow down in this hymn to the specific message of the day so early in the service. This opening hymn ought to be so selected so as to achieve the unity of the congregation by their joint worship of God.

The hymn preceding the sermon should ordinarily be chosen for its value in preparing either the *hearts* or the *minds* of the hearers. If the purpose of the hymn is to prepare the *hearts* of the congregation, it may not suggest the theme of the day at all. It may consist of a petition for a proper attitude toward the truth to be proclaimed. If, on the other hand, the hymn is intended to prepare the *minds* of the people in the congregation, it may introduce the subject to be discussed at length in the sermon. It may furnish the necessary background of vicarious experience or desirable information to lend emphasis to the day's message. However, even here there is no need of narrowing down too far. The problem of the moment may often be only the application of eternal truth expressed in the hymn.

The hymn after the sermon can be used effectively as an offertory, in which the members of the congregation express their acceptance of the truth proclaimed and their surrender to the will of God, as described to them. It ought not, as a rule, to be used to reinforce the chief thought of the sermon. The latter is sacramental in its function, while hymns are classified as sacrificial; that is, hymns are a means of response by the congregation to the truth from God.

If there is a closing hymn, it will

normally consist of a parting benediction in the spirit of the apostolic or Aaronic blessing. Sometimes it is desirable to use a doxology, such as the Common Doxology, at this point rather than at the opening of the worship service; for in spirit the various doxologies correspond to the closing words of many an apostolic letter written to the early Christians.

It will be a happier day in American Protestantism when more time is devoted to the matter of choosing appropriate hymns to conform to their basic function of serving as "vehicles of worship" *ad maiorem Dei gloriam.*

Sermon Illustrations

Contributed by Readers of the Pulpit

AN AMERICAN newspaper correspondent in Moscow stood outside the Kremlin as news of the Yalta conference was broadcast over the loudspeakers. Beside him stood a Russian mother who had just learned that her fourth and last son had been killed in action. With the mother were her four daughters-in-law. The five women stood close together to keep away the cold night air, for it was almost midnight. The music stopped; then the announcer began to repeat the words of the Yalta agreement: "It is our inflexible purpose to insure that the peace of the world will never again be disturbed." The women broke into quiet sobbing. Then the Russian mother, turning to the American correspondent, said in tones that were almost pleading, "They mean that, don't they? Tell me they do. For by the Lord God I say we have paid for no less than that!"—*Edward R. Thomas, First Methodist Church, Baton Rouge, La.*

● *The Origin of Thanksgiving*

Most North Americans tend to regard the "saints and sinners" who founded New England as for the most part difficult and dour. In any group that takes life's issues seriously there are bound to be those who become solemn and severe. Among such Pilgrim fathers and mothers the institution of Thanksgiving Day must have come as a sweetening influence. You recall from schooldays how the festival of remembrance of all God's mercies originated. When the colonies were first planted, the settlers endured many privations. Being devoutly religious they laid their distresses before God on days of fasting and prayer. Continual meditation on the difficulties of their lot tended to make them gloomy and discontented, even disposed some to return to England. At last, when it was proposed to appoint still another day of penitence, an old colonist gifted with common sense said it seemed high time that they should remember all God's mercies to them. After all, in spite of adversity, they enjoyed happy homes, growing strength, civil and religious liberty, and above all the great salvation Christ had won for them. He proposed therefore that instead of a fast they should keep a feast. His advice was taken, and from that time Thanksgiving Day has been an annual observance in America. — *David A. MacLennan, Timothy Eaton Memorial Church, Toronto.*

● *This Is True Thanksgiving*

"Always give thanks for everything to God our Father," urges Paul. Life for him was grim. For every one of his comrades in the little army of Christ the tomorrows looked rugged and ragged. They followed One whose life had ended on two Roman slabs uplifted on a hill. Christ had promised no "perfect" existence for the men and women who trudged along with him; he did promise and give something infinitely better: abiding and unquenchable joy. And his ablest interpreter was sure that they would find that joy by concentrating on the liabilities and losses, the deprivations and defeats. "Always give thanks for everything to God our Father, as followers of our Lord Jesus Christ."—*David A. MacLennan, Timothy Eaton Memorial Church, Toronto.*

● *Off the Record*

This morning, sitting in a broadcasting studio preparing for a worship broadcast, I noticed another group in an adjoining studio preparing for a hymn-sing program. Since the same engineer was working with both studios we got part of each other's programs. The first time the engineer switched them in I heard: "You can tell the world we're pretty damn good." After that they kept right on singing, "Let's have a little talk with Jesus," in lovely harmony. They followed this with "Kneeling at the Cross." And they thought they were "damn good."

I went on with my preparations and again the engineer switched to the hymn singers, just in time to hear: "I know it's going to be a hell of a job, but we've got to go right from this into 'Sweet Hour of Prayer.' "

It seems to me that one of the curses of our generation is a professional ministry, whether in preaching or singing. A professionalism which can sing sacred songs beautifully, even though it is a "hell of a job," and sing them "damn good," all for the sake of making a living, is killing genuine religion and morality in our country. We professionalize preaching, singing and religion in general at our own peril.—*Carl J. Landes, CROP Director, Ohio Food Train Headquarters, Columbus, Ohio.*

● *The Power of Love*

One of our American novelists tells of a lovely lady who was married to a weak-willed man. After many years of life together he revealed to her that he had been a thief and was about to be exposed. He begged her to leave him and get away from it all before she too became involved. She looked at this human derelict facing a prison sentence and asked, "Is it possible that we have lived together so long and you have never learned that my love for you is so great that what you have done is my deed too?" The loving loyalty of that wife was electric. A broken-down man stooped to build his life with "worn-out tools" because he had discovered the compelling power of suffering love.—*K. Morgan Edwards, First Methodist Church, Glendale, Calif.*

● *Things Have Certainly Changed*

In the opening chapter of *The House of the Seven Gables,* Nathaniel Hawthorne described the crowd en route to the housewarming at Colonel Pyncheon's in this manner: "Pyncheon Street was thronged at the appointed hour, as with a congregation on the way to church." If we wanted to describe a sizable crowd today we would have to mention a queue waiting outside a ball park or a movie theater—but a crowd going to church—how silly!—*Herbert W. Keebler, Lagonda Avenue Congregational Church, Springfield, Ohio.*

● *Thanksgiving Memorial*

For years the survivors of the Pilgrim colony at Plymouth followed the custom at Thanksgiving time of placing five grains of corn at every place to remind them and their children of the grave days of the first winter in the new country when the supply of food was so depleted that corn was rationed five grains at a time. It was an effective reminder of the suffering and the hardship that had made the successful free settlement possible. It was a fitting symbol of the austerity out of which the first Thanksgiving was born. It was a worthy memorial of the spirit of true thankfulness which led the Pilgrim fathers to count their blessings instead of their woes. *G. H. B.*

Speaking Of Sermons—

EDWARD R. THOMAS of the First Methodist Church, Baton Rouge, La., sends us a sermon entitled "Can We Know Peace in Our Time?" He begins with the story of the newspaper correspondent in Moscow (see Illustrations page) and states this premise: "Like that Russian mother, we too want peace." Yet, he declares, there is no peace even though we have the promise of the Master who said, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you."

Peace, Mr. Thomas contends, is not the absence of storm—or the absence of conflict in our lives. When Jesus promised his peace to the disciples he spoke in the midst of conflict. Says the preacher, "Jesus realized that life is conflict, and he tried to prepare his disciples for it."

"Then what is this peace about which Jesus spoke—this gift of Christ to his disciples? Have you ever watched a tank charge across the field? It twists and turns as the driver guides it over ditches, around corners and across tree trunks. One wonders how one would be able to even stay in the thing, let alone shoot a gun and hit a target from it. Actually the tank gunners are extremely accurate, for there is inside the tank a gyroscope which keeps the gun on the target, no matter what the terrain. Peace is like that. It's the inner gyroscope we call the soul. It directs and balances one when conflicts seem to toss our lives about. . . ."

● *True Faith Helps*

"A young man tells this story of the war: 'We took to a ditch along the road and lay there for two and one-half hours, pinned down by enemy fire. I opened my billfold where I kept a small calendar from the commission on chaplains. A scripture verse printed on it read, "Yea though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me." After all, I was thinking, what is there in life that could be of greater value than that? To have God with one was certainly more important than to have a whole division of rescuers.' Can you picture that scene? War without, shells bursting dangerously close, but there was peace within."

Further illustrations are taken from the experience of John Henry Newman, who wrote "Lead, Kindly Light" when he was filled with inner turmoil, and from John Wesley's story of the storm at sea when he was crossing to America. The idea Cardinal Newman expressed in his great hymn and the lesson Wesley learned from the Moravians are examples of true peace.

This peace will come only when we put our trust in God who speaks to us through the world's turmoil, "Let not your heart be troubled. Peace I leave with you. My peace I give unto you."

The pastor of Timothy Eaton Memorial Church, Toronto, Canada, the Rev. David A. MacLennan, preached a sermon last year at the Chicago Sunday Evening Club services on Thanksgiving Sunday which is worthy of being recalled to mind as we approach the same season this year. Thanks to his generosity, a copy of the sermon is at hand. It is entitled "The Thin Thread of Thanks," from a quotation in the autobiography of G. K. Chesterton.

● *Taking Life for Gratitude*

In Chesterton's youth, Dr. MacLennan tells us, he became muddled and confused, "not knowing what to do with life or what to make of it." In his confusion, Chesterton "hung on to the remains of religion by one thin thread of thanks." He "thanked whatever gods might be because of any life lived at all." Says Dr. MacLennan, "He 'took life for gratitude, not for granted.' He did not expect of life more than it had to give. He refused to whine or repine because there was so little good; he relished the good which existed. The tenuous 'thin thread of thanks' led him into ampler, more zestful living."

The introduction to the sermon concludes with these words: "If only you and I could find that 'thin thread of thanks,' cling to it, and follow it! We would find ourselves moving into newness of life, exchanging our feeble limping walk for a confident march to triumphant music and proud banners. We might even experience a blaze of wonder which would transfigure the common days."

● *Always Give Thanks*

The sermon has three points, as any good sermon should. Grasp the thin thread of thanks and follow it into personal happiness. As we follow the thin thread of thanks we are led deeper into durable joy because our kindled gratitude stimulates us to share "all the blessings of this life" with others. Finally, the thin thread of thanks leads us into more satisfying personal living; it stimualtes us to enter into mutually enriching relationships with others. The text? It is from Ephesians 5:20, "Always give thanks for everything to God our Father, as followers of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Goodspeed).

Lowell M. Atkinson, minister of the Methodist Church of Hackensack, N. J., begins a sermon on "What Will You Do With Jesus?" by quoting from Browning's "Saul":

> "Would I suffer for him that I love?
> So wouldst thou—so wilt thou!
> . . . See the Christ stand."

"We have seen the Christ stand," says Dr. Atkinson, and what will we do with him? He suggests several possible courses.

"We may wash our hands of Christ in complete moral irresponsibility." This would make us "disciples" of Pilate who "evaded the answer his conscience gave him." Or we may "follow Jesus although we are beset with stubborn doubts." It is Thomas, of course, who is our example of this course—yet Thomas, though doubting, was faithful in crisis even to the point of being willing to die with his Master.

"We may repudiate Jesus." This is the third course open to us. Judas did that. Dr. Atkinson sees Judas as a figure who tried to serve both Christ and Mammon. When he realized that his material hopes would never be fulfilled in his Master "he expressed his wrath in the terrible deed of treachery," then took his own life. Will our choice be one of "staunch loyalty or shameful betrayal"?

● *'We Needs Must Love the Highest'*

Like Peter, "we may give Christ a wavering allegiance." So often we find ourselves following Jesus "afar off." Is this what we really would do with him? Or will we "follow Jesus in simple trust"? If we do this we will be following the example of the beloved disciple. "The beauty of John's spirit need not seem beyond our experience," says this preacher. "The gentle, winsome disciple had many battles to fight before he achieved his glowing faith and lovely spirit. . . . One of the sons of thunder . . . he was ambitious for a first place in Christ's Kingdom . . . but he was saved by his loyalty to Jesus. He followed the tender guidance of the Master out of the realm of wrath into the glory of love, out of selfish ambition into the awesome wonder of the supreme sacrifice."

"How will it be with you?" Dr. Atkinson closes with a quotation from the *Idylls of the King* where Tennyson makes Guinevere cry to God in anguished prayer:

> "We needs must love the highest
> when we see it,
> Not Lancelot, nor another."

"Here is life's loftiest truth . . . we have seen Christ stand! May we follow him in constancy and love as he leads us into our life's true good!" G. H. B.

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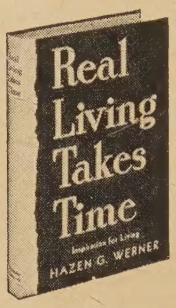

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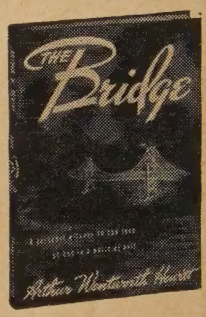

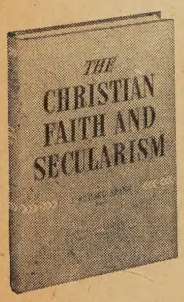

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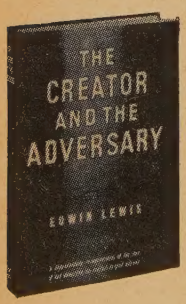

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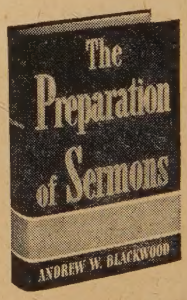

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